

The Quarterbreed

BY
ROBERT
AMES
BENNETT

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BY EDWIN S. HENNING

It was the night of the first ball at the White House. As usual, there was a great crush. Hardy, in conventional evening dress—not in official costume, as the regulations required—managed in some mysterious manner to obtain entrance. The secret-service men had no instructions with regard to him, and considerable time passed before anyone intimate to him heeded his unobtrusive presence.

He, in turn, was so intent upon maneuvering to have himself spoken to by that most genial of hosts, the president, that he failed to see Marie until she spoke to him. The first sight of her bewildered him, and his bow did not altogether hide the effects of the delicious shock given him by her dazzling beauty. But he quickly recovered his self-possession when he saw that she was with Vandervyn. That young man, though more boyishly handsome than ever, bore himself with rather a sullen air. He met Hardy's clear gaze with a forced smile. The smile became still more forced when the girl transferred her hand from his arm to Hardy's.

"Only a very few minutes," she soothed the disappointed lover.

"Whatever you say," he deferred to her caprice, and he drew back to speak to a sharp-eyed man near the president.

Hardy was gazing into the wonderful blue-black eyes of his companion. They were as inscrutable as when he had last looked into their depths. He tried to speak calmly, but his voice shook.

"Do you know that you are by far the most beautiful woman here?"

Her long lashes drooped and rose again to disclose the same inscrutable look.

"So I have been told several times already—I wished a few moments with you, that I might thank you for your generosity. It has given me the great opportunity of my trip abroad and this visit in Washington."

"I am saving all the reports of your social triumphs," he said. "They have made me very happy."

Again the girl's lashes drooped. "That is good of you—it is quite necessary for me to become the rage—if I am to force a recognition from Reggie's relatives. He says that, fortunately, his niece has become interested in another man who is quite as eligible as himself."

Hardy's eyes contracted, yet he did not falter:

"Since it will bring you happiness, I wish him—good fortune."

"You do?" The question was almost an exclamation. But the girl at once regained her quiet composure. "I do not understand. If you wish him good fortune, why then do you seek to prevent him from receiving his compensation as attorney for the tribe?"

"I said good fortune," replied Hardy. "Any money paid him on that contract would be tainted."

Marie arched her black eyebrows. "Is it not true that he will get through a much larger appropriation than otherwise would have been made?"

"The lands are fully worth the amount agreed upon," stated Hardy. "The tribe should receive all the appropriation. Honest lobbying would carry the bill through at a cost of a few hundred dollars. These supposed friends of the tribe want millions."

"Do you wish to deprive me of the share that I would receive through him?"

"Yes—of every dishonest dollar," said Hardy, his mouth stern, though his eyes besought her to forgive his harshness. "You have enough already."

"Are you certain?" she rejoined. "You may have heard that mines often pinch out or run into valueless ore—You can guess why Pere and I have told no one, least of all Reggie."

Hardy remained unshaken. "If he is worthy of you, that will make no difference to him."

"But myself? I am already used to luxury," pleaded the girl.

"Down in your heart you know the values in life that are real," he said. "You do not wish for wealth gained through fraud."

"I have not admitted that there is any fraud in the contract."

"Perhaps it is as well," he remarked. "You should not doubt your future husband."

She flashed him an odd, quizzical look. "No, I cannot doubt my future husband now, Captain Hardy. I must believe in him if I am to be happy, must I not?"

"Yes," agreed Hardy.

She uttered a gay little trill of laughter.

"That is so good of you to say it, Captain! It makes me feel that I really must do something for you in return. May I not offer you a little loan of, say, three or four thousand dollars? I understand that, for some strange reason—or unreason—you have refused your pay as captain."

"My resignation has not been withdrawn, and I am engaged in a private enterprise. I cannot draw pay as an officer in the service," explained Hardy.

"Few would be so quixotic," she remarked.

gued. "Most would make the excuse that an attempt to frustrate what they considered a wrong to others is not to be considered a private enterprise."

"I must beg to differ with you, Miss Dupont."

"Then let it pass. But the little loan?"

"Very good of you to offer. However, I believe I have enough left to last me through. And in any event, I



"I Could Not Impose on Your Generosity."

could not impose on your generosity. The money would be used against him—which, you see, would hardly do."

"Then you refuse any loan?"

"It was most kind of you to make the offer."

"Don Quixote de la Mancha!" she murmured.

"Tilting at machine windmills!" he replied.

Though there was no trace of bitterness or satire in his wit, her chin lifted to the angle of offended pride. "That is sufficient, Captain Hardy. May I ask you to take me back to him?"

Vandervyn was waiting for her near the president. As they approached him, she gave Hardy a look of half-repentment. "You must understand, Captain, that I must do as my heart dictates, though I confess that lobbying is far from agreeable to me. I have already met his excellency, and he has been so kind as to promise me a hearing."

"I cannot wish you success," he replied.

She gave him a quizzical glance and turned away with Vandervyn.

Standing in the eager, jostling crowd that waited for a word or even a nod from the president, he fully appreciated the ease with which, in the midst of so great a crush, she managed to obtain several moments' conversation apart with the nation's chief magistrate.

She was still beside the president when the sharp-eyed man to whom Vandervyn had spoken came around beside Hardy and murmured a few words in his ear. Hardy looked him in the eye, bowed, and quietly started to move away. The man followed him until he had left the White House.

CHAPTER XXV.

Condemned.

The court-martial began its session at nine in the morning, and the trial of Hardy was over before three in the afternoon. Vandervyn testified to the suppression by the accused of the existence of the developed mine and of Redbear's misconduct.

Hardy's statements in explanation of his actions were as brief as they were cold and dry. Acting as a civil officer, he had considered the question of withholding any mention of the mine as a matter within his discretion. When interrogated whether he had not taken advantage of this suppression to enter the contest and win the mine for himself, his bald admission of the fact, unaccompanied by any explanation of his motives, was received by his officer judges with marked gravity.

The other charges were far more serious, and he opposed them with vigor. He denied emphatically any intention to desert or to remain permanently absent from his proper duties without leave, and showed the telegram from a high official in the war department that led him to believe his resignation and application for leave of absence would be at once favorably acted upon by his commanding officer at Vancouver barracks. This, in some circumstances, might have been considered sufficient excuse for his conduct. But his refusal to explain his reason for taking advantage of his secret knowledge of the mine perceptibly influenced the members of the court to doubt the statement of his purpose in coming to Washington.

Though the court-martial adjourned without rendering its findings, he left the courtroom ten years older in appearance than when he entered. The regretful, commiserating glance of the most friendly of his judges seemed plainly to indicate what would be the

(To be continued)

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION OF TANEY COUNTY, MISSOURI.

Be it remembered that the Honorable County Board of Equalization of Taney County, Missouri, met in the office of the Clerk of the County Court, in the court house in the Town of Forsyth on the 2nd day of April, it being the first Monday of April, 1917, and the following officers were present, to wit: G. T. Hicks, presiding judge of the County Court, J. G. Haskins, J. M. Holliday, Associate Justices of the County Court, N. D. Wallace, County Surveyor, and J. R. Gibson, Clerk of the Court and ex officio Secretary of said Board, when and where the following proceedings were had and made matter of record.

1st, N. D. Wallace was elected Chairman.

2nd, Administration of the oath, to members of said Board.

State of Missouri County of Taney ss.

We the undersigned members of the Board of Equalization of Taney County Missouri, do solemnly swear that we will fairly and impartially equalize and adjust the Real Estate and Personal Property of Taney County, to the best of our knowledge.

N. D. WALLACE
J. M. HOLLIDAY
G. T. HICKS
J. G. HASKINS

(SEAL) Subscribed and sworn to before me this 2nd day of April 1917.

J. R. GIBSON
Clerk of the County Court.

1st, day April 2, 1917.

Ordered by the Court that the following tracts of land and town lots etc be raised or lowered from the value on the left column to the value on the right column.

Ordered that the Board adjourn until 8:30 o'clock tomorrow, April 3rd.

N. D. WALLACE Chairman.

The Board convened at 8:30 o'clock April 3rd, 1917.

Second day April 3rd, 1917.

Assessed value Increased value

C. A. Rhodes, 30 acres, 1-2 section 22 township 22 range 17. \$ 300.00 \$ 400.00

Mart McCall, 30 acres, 1-2 section 22 township 22 range 17. 500.00 600.00

A. M. Cox, 30 acres, 1-2 section 22 township 22 range 17. 300.00 400.00

W. T. Holt, 30 acres, 1-2 section 22 township 22 range 17. 200.00 300.00

James Herd, 30 acres, 1-2 section 22 township 22 range 17. 300.00 400.00

C. A. Carley, 30 acres, 1-2 section 22 township 22 range 17. 700.00 800.00

J. A. Sherrod, 30 acres, 1-2 section 22 township 22 range 17. 1700.00 2500.00

J. B. Hutchins, 30 acres, 1-2 section 22 township 22 range 17. 300.00 400.00

J. E. Souder, 30 acres, 1-2 section 22 township 22 range 17. 200.00 300.00

Ernest Rose, 30 acres, 1-2 section 22 township 22 range 17. 100.00 200.00

W. J. Lawrence, 30 acres, 1-2 section 22 township 22 range 17. 100.00 200.00

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